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female face is covered with horizontal lines in black. The space between the black profile of the male face and the circle is also covered by horizontal lines in black. The space in between the profile of the dove and the circle to the left of the dove is also in black. The leaf and twig is in black. One eye of the dove is shown in the form of a dot.

(Ins. by Notification No. S.O. 373(E) dated 23rd June, 1986).

Impact of Price Hike Under P.D.S.

3765. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether rise in prices of rice, sugar and wheat under the PDS have also affected the prices and supply of these commodities in the open market;

(b) whether the Government have also taken serious view of the shortage and the rise in prices of these commodities;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check the same?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (d) The Central Issue Prices of wheat and rice raised w.e.f. 1.2.1994 are still in force. The revised issue prices under Targetted PDS announced by the Government on 24.2.1997 have not yet been given effect to, in any of the States/UTs.

The retail issue price of levy sugar supplied through PDS has been raised from Rs. 9.05 per kg. to Rs. 10.50 per kg. w.e.f. 10.2.1997.

Adequate stock of sugar is available with the Government. With judicious releases of sugar in the open market, prices have been kept under control.

As regards rice, the availability and price situation continues to be normal. Artificial scarcity of wheat was witnessed in recent months of 1996-97 season.

The Government have taken number of steps including import of wheat upto 2 million tonnes, increased allocation for PDS and open Market Sales Scheme, imposition of licensing and stock holding limits and action against hoarders and black marketeers under the provisions of Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act.

[Translation]

Mining of Precious Stones

3766. SHRI N.J. RATHWA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the complaints have been received regarding the illegal mining of precious stones found in the reserved forests of Gujarat particularly in the tribal dominated areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof for last three years till date;

(c) whether the Government have got conducted any inquiry in this regard;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to prevent illegal mining of such precious stones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) According to report submitted by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Gujarat, a complaint regarding illegal mining of wallastonite, a precious mineral from Dhanpura forest survey No. 339 and 257 has been received.

(c) and (d) The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests has reported that revenue as well as forest officials have inquired into the matter. They have found that two leaseholders, who were granted lease for lime stone mining in revenue survey No. 255/2 of village Dhanpura, had illegally mined in 0.03 ha. of forest area of survey No. 339 during January, 1993.

(e) Forest Department of Gujarat has taken following action in this regard:—

1. 12 truckloads of mined mineral and 20 tons of mineral powder had been seized.
2. A criminal complaint has been lodged against the accused and Forester in charge of the forest area has been warned.

It has also been reported that no illegal mining has been noticed after the action has been taken by the Department. The matter is pending in the court of law.